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FREIGHT CONTAINERS IN POLISH AND SOVIET TRANSPORT

POLISH USE OF CONTAINERS

Engr Zygmunt Wagner
 Przegląd Techniczny, Mar/Apr 1950

For many years British railroads have used freight containers, usually cases, which can be moved with their contents and delivered to their place of destination. This system of transport has proved very practical and economical and has become popular throughout the world.

It is recommended that one central organization be set up in Poland immediately to study the advantages of freight containers and introduce them on a large scale both within the country and in international transport.

Before World War II, Poland used containers to a very limited extent. During the war, Germany used containers even in transporting goods within Polish territory. However, only a few of these remain. Since the war, interest in containers has increased throughout industry and commerce. Railroads and technical and economic publications have helped to acquaint the public with the advantages of the system.

While Polish interest in containers is very recent, this method of transportation is very important in Poland because of the large volume of freight traffic between Poland and the USSR, which has different gauge railroads.

Before the war, in railroad traffic between Poland and the USSR, the method of changing wheel assemblies of freight cars was used. This system has not yet been reinstated, and it appears that use of containers would be more profitable, especially in transporting miscellaneous freight. Containers are especially useful in transporting perishable goods. The same container can travel by ship, motor, and rail to its destination.

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According to Gospodarka Planowa, August 1950, the number of freight containers on Polish railroads is expected to increase 100-fold, or at least to 140,000 by 1955. Included in Poland's Six-Year-Plan is the proposed increase in the use of transportation containers to carry bricks, glass, bottled products, electric light bulbs, fruit, vegetables, etc., and special tank containers for fluids such as milk.

CONTAINERS IN THE USSR

Containers have been used throughout the USSR for many years. Dimensions of the most commonly used containers are as follows:

Capacity 2.5 tons: 2,150 x 1,325 x 2,300 mm
Capacity 5 tons: 2,150 x 2,700 x 2,300 mm

After the war in the USSR, special attention was given to a convenient method of transporting construction materials such as bricks, cement, ceramic products, etc. Containers proved the most efficient method of transporting materials from factory or plant to building site.

A container used for handling slag blocks and bricks is constructed as follows: the base is made of angle irons 35 x 35 x 4 millimeters and metal plate 2 millimeters thick, 650 x 445 millimeters. The bottom of the shorter side has two handles to which are attached, by means of hinges, two steel suspension yokes made of rods 18 millimeters thick bent into triangular shape. These yokes form the ends of the container and are used for lifting. A cross bar with hooks turned upward on each end is attached to the yoke about 557 millimeters from the bottom. The sides of the container are made of bars, three horizontal and three vertical; the middle vertical bar is slipped into a metal pipe attached to the angle plate on the bottom of the container. The top horizontal bar terminates in hooks, turned down, which fit over upturned hooks of the ends. The container weighs 24.6 kilograms empty; with a load of slag block, it weighs 276 kilograms, and with a load of red brick, 250 kilograms.

This container holds 9 blocks 380 x 185 x 215 mm or 64 bricks. The height is so calculated that the top row of bricks protrudes above the sides so that loaded containers can be placed one over the other to save space. This type of container is also used to transport various reinforced concrete parts.

Special containers for mortar are used in the USSR, and are made of 2-millimeter-gauge sheet metal. The sides and bottom are welded and the dimensions are 686 x 400 millimeters. The rim is edged with angle irons 35 x 35 x 4 millimeters. The container has a capacity of .15 cubic meter. Empty, the container weighs 27.8 kilograms; loaded, 220 kilograms. There are two arms attached to the sides for lifting.

These containers can be used as mixing troughs and for the transport of sand, cinders, etc. Special carts are used to transport the containers. These carts are made 3/4 - 1 inch tubing and consist of a frame with handles and support from which the container is hung. The carts have two rubber-tired metal wheels on roller bearings. The dimensions of the cart are: over-all length with handles, 2,000 millimeters; width, 1,190 millimeters, height, 950 millimeters.

These carts are used to transport the containers over scaffoldings in buildings and to lifts or cranes. Smaller carts are used on narrow scaffoldings. These are 1,600 millimeters long and 820 millimeters wide.

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Portal cranes are used to facilitate the loading of containers into freight cars. These cranes have a span of 7 meters and two consoles with an extension of 4 meters each. The hoist, weighing 1,700 kilograms, is equipped with roller bearings and traverse on overhead rails so that the load can be handled manually by two men. A special traverse used to lift the container, is made of 50 x 50 millimeter angle irons with six to eight hooks for the containers.

Containers are also being used in the USSR for loading steel balls for grist mills. The balls are loaded at the presses directly into 5-ton container. The containers are carried by truck, and emptied automatically into freight cars, permitting the loading of a 20-ton car in about 15 minutes.

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